

How to Maximize the Impact of Your Newsletter

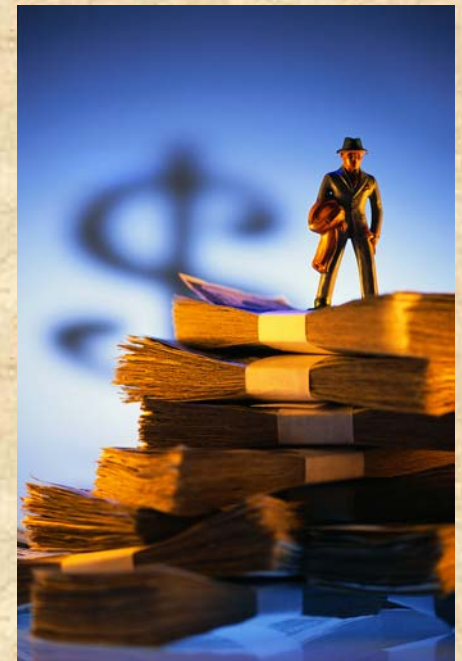
AMWA 2006 Conference

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The Most Bang for Your Buck

- ◆ Meet the needs of your readers
- ◆ Motivate the reader to respond
- ◆ Attract readers who skim
- ◆ Evaluate effectiveness
- ◆ Write using journalism style



Meet Your Reader's Needs

Who is your audience?

- ◆ Health care professionals
- ◆ Patients/consumers
- ◆ Salespeople
- ◆ Employees
- ◆ Donors
- ◆ Clients/members

Meet Your Reader's Needs

Use the right language & reading level

Lede for physician newsletter:

A treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia that offers the same clinical outcomes as transurethral resection of the prostate without its side effects is available at Hospital X.

Meet Your Reader's Needs

Lede for patient newsletter:

Patient X went to the emergency room after he experienced excruciating pain while trying to urinate. He soon learned that he had an enlarged prostate, known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

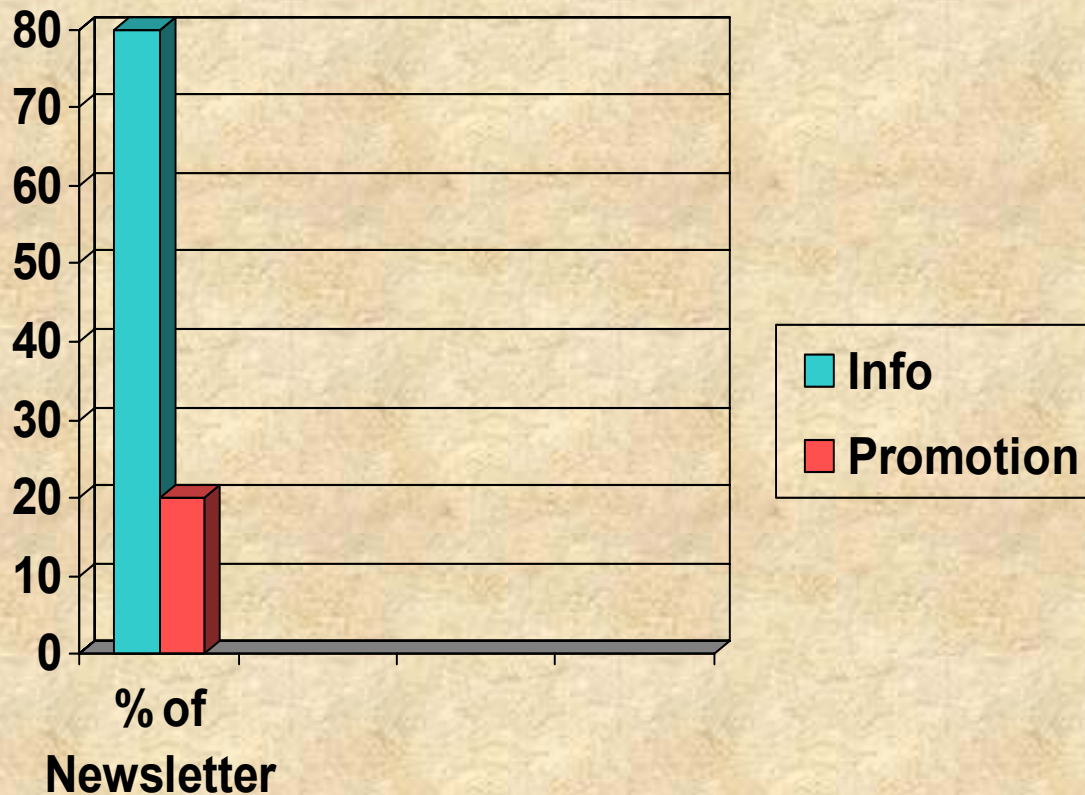
Meet Your Reader's Needs

What do your readers want to know?

- ◆ Information (how-to, disease symptoms, etc.)
- ◆ New facilities, equipment, programs, products, services, research, doctors, etc.
- ◆ Upcoming events
- ◆ Profiles of interesting people in or related to your organization

Meet Your Reader's Needs

Ideal Breakdown of Newsletter Content



Meet Your Reader's Needs

Promotional lede:

The Hospitalists' Service of X Hospital is not only the first in the region, it is the largest. Ten board-certified internal medicine physicians provide care exclusively in the hospital environment.

Meet Your Reader's Needs

Informational lede:

Research shows that patients who receive care from hospitalists have a shorter average length of stay and lower cost of care.

Hospitalists have been an important part of inpatient care at Hospital X since 19XX, the oldest such program in the region.

Influence Reader to Respond

- ◆ Decide what your goals/objectives are
- ◆ Decide how you will communicate them
- ◆ Include a call to action



Influence Reader to Respond

Sample goals:

- ◆ Increase the number of members of your health care group purchasing company who participate in group purchasing contracts for cardiovascular services.
- ◆ Inform members of new group purchasing contracts for CV services.

Influence Reader to Respond

Communicate with newsletter article that informs members of:

- ❖ **New group purchasing contracts for CV services**
- ❖ **Benefits of participating in group purchasing contracts for CV services**
- ❖ **Testimonials of members who have saved their organizations money by participating**

Influence Reader to Respond

Call to action:

To learn how to save money on these CV products, e-mail the CV services manager at Name@CompanyX.com or call (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Influence Reader to Respond

Ways to vary call to action beyond “For more information ...”:

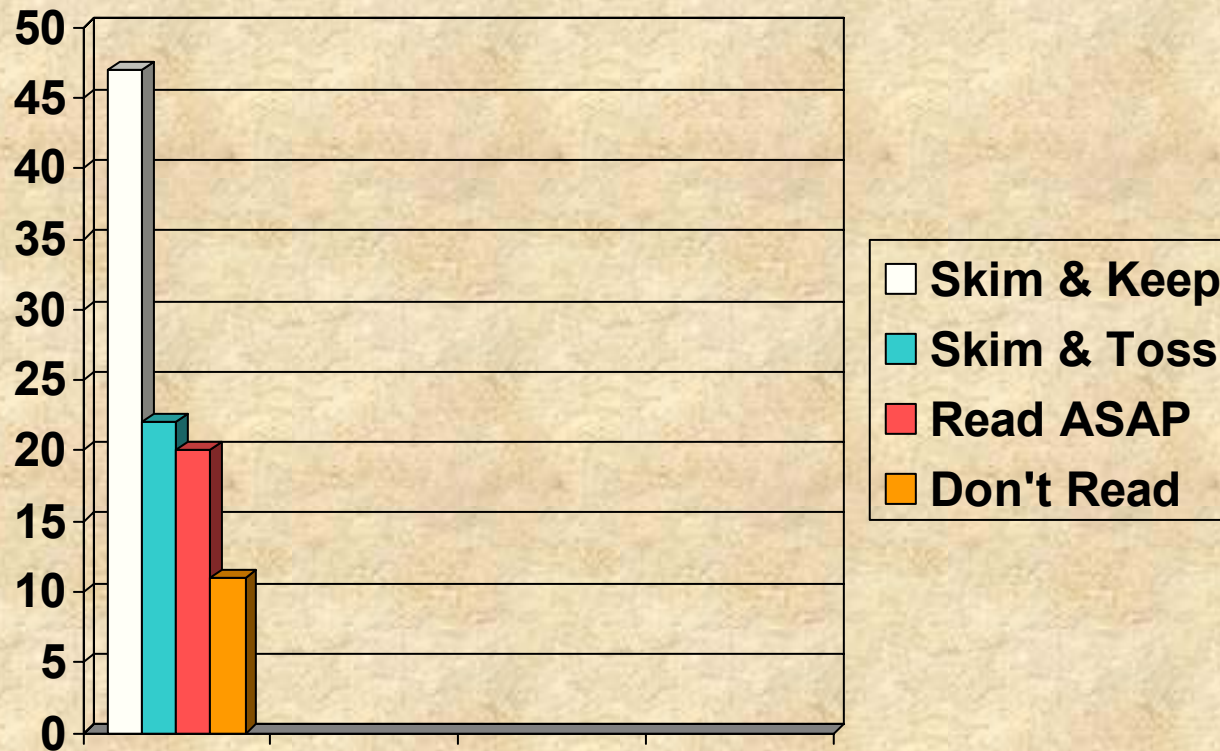
- ◆ Vary wording: “Visit our Web site for details ...”
- ◆ Include benefit: “For a free evaluation” or “To get your free brochure”
- ◆ Put in a sidebar as a bullet point
- ◆ Give registration info to a program/event

Attract Skimmers



Attract Skimmers

69% skim newsletter from favorite nonprofit



Attract Skimmers

Use your best “real estate”:

- ◆ Mailing panel
- ◆ Photo captions
- ◆ Headlines
- ◆ Front page stories



Attract Skimmers

Make your mailing label count.

- ◆ “Inside this issue” highlights
- ◆ Blurb of information that focuses attention on something you want to promote

Attract Skimmers

Put more than an ID in captions.

- ◆ *Use a quote:* Instead of Patient X after knee replacement surgery, write: “I can walk again without pain,” said Patient X after knee replacement surgery.
- ◆ *Be descriptive:* Instead of Dr. X demonstrates the surgical robot, write: Dr. X demonstrates the surgical robot, which he uses to perform heart surgery.

Attract Skimmers

Headlines should grab attention & be specific.

Instead of Laparoscopic Surgery Available, write:

Laparoscopic Surgery Speeds Healing

or:

Laparoscopic Surgery: Tiny Instruments, Big Benefits

Attract Skimmers

Put best stories on front page:

- ◆ Biggest news
- ◆ Success story
- ◆ Area needing most marketing

Attract Skimmers

**Do NOT put Message From the President/
Chair on front page unless he or she is:**

- new
- needs more visibility
- is well known and the reason for readers to read (e.g., alumni publication)
- announcing big news (e.g., ties in with cover story)

Attract Skimmers

Text should:

- ◆ Be concise, clear and interesting
- ◆ Have short sentences and paragraphs
- ◆ Be broken up with subheads, lists, pullout quotes and sidebar articles (or hyperlinks)
- ◆ Be accompanied by a good photo or illustration

Attract Skimmers

Text should *not*:

- ◆ Have too many pages (>8-12)
- ◆ Be jumped to another page

Evaluate Your Effectiveness

Each article should have an objective.

- ◆ Self-evaluate
- ◆ Survey readers
- ◆ Track response rate
- ◆ Give readers an opt-out from mailing of e-newsletters

Use Journalism Style

Do:

- ◆ Put most important information first
- ◆ Include who, what, where, when, why & how in opening paragraphs
- ◆ Use active tense, not passive
- ◆ Use direct quotes where appropriate
- ◆ Research and use facts & statistics
- ◆ Give sources for statistics

Use Journalism Style

Don't:

- ◆ Give personal opinions unless in a quote
- ◆ Use jargon
- ◆ Abbreviate without expanding at 1st use
- ◆ Reprint articles without permission
- ◆ Forget to proofread

References

- ❖ www.writing911.com
- ❖ The Newsletter Factory,
www.nlf.com/html/articles.html
- ❖ www.companynewsletters.com/newsread.htm
- ❖ New Brunswick Climate Change Outreach Hub,
www.nbhub.org/hubfiles/pdf/Newsletter_Writing_Guidelines.pdf
- ❖ The Write Idea, “6 Common Mistakes Businesses Make When Using Customer Newsletters as a Marketing Tool,”
www.ineedcopy.com/articles.html

Survey Software

◆ www.surveymonkey.com

(free for up to 10 questions and 100 responses per survey)*

*Recommended by a member of my workshop audience. Kathleen Loudon has no experience using this software, makes no claims of its effectiveness and has no proprietary interest in it. Other survey software is available.